

officer. Now we have one officer for only four and a half to five and a half enlisted (varies by branch).

This is very expensive, both for active duty and retirement, but it also makes it much more likely that we will get involved in every little conflict around the world and/or continue basing troops in almost every country.

We simply do not have enough money to pay for defense of so many countries other than our own nor the authority under our Constitution to try to run the whole world.

NAFTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, the American economy stands today at a crucial moment.

With globalization and advancement in technology, the world economy continues to become more intertwined than ever, as countries trade goods and services at rates never seen before.

It is easy to look at this change and turn inward in an attempt to shore up America's position in the world economy, but that will only set us up for more struggles down the line.

Here in America, we make and produce the best goods in the world, but tariffs and regulations put American goods at a disadvantage in too many countries. That is why it is so crucial we continue to support free and fair trade, working to better our trade agreements, like the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, to help American businesses and families.

In my district, Illinois' 18th Congressional district, agriculture remains the largest portion of our economy. In fact, we are the eighth largest agriculture district in the country. Some of the most fertile farmland in the entire world is located in the 18th District.

As great as the products we grow may be, our farmers and agriculture industry must have markets to sell their goods. That is why free trade agreements like NAFTA come in, removing barriers that allow our corn and soybeans to be sold all over the world at competitive prices.

Since the implementation of NAFTA, American agriculture exports have more than quadrupled from \$8.9 million to \$38 billion annually, bringing more money back to our rural and agriculture communities. It is so important that this amount of money comes back to our district and it is the reason why our agriculture sector now supports over 21 million jobs here at home.

Other sectors of our economy are just as affected by trade, especially in manufacturing. With 95 percent of the world's consumers living outside of the United States, protectionist tariffs and policies in other countries put American goods at a disadvantage.

Since NAFTA's implementation, we have seen these barriers come down and more markets opening up to our exports. That is why our trade agreement partners receive half of all ex-

ports of American manufactured goods. The benefits of this are passed on to hardworking families, with jobs linked to trade paying 15 to 20 percent more and accounting for more than 38 million jobs across our country.

While NAFTA and free trade have allowed for this kind of prosperity and growth, we must also be mindful of the problems that can arise. For example, recent Canadian policies creating quotas for American poultry and dairy have threatened those industries here at home. That is why it is time to take a fresh look at our trade agreements, not with an eye to withdrawing from the global economy, but with the goal of making our trade fairer and better.

As President Trump and his team continue to renegotiate the terms of the NAFTA deal, it is my hope that they can keep in mind the businesses, farming operations, and families of districts like Illinois' 18th. Free trade is a win-win for our Nation, and it is vital that we work hard to make these agreements fairer to keep America at the forefront of the world economy.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 38 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, thank You for giving us another day. We thank You on this day for the example of St. Nicholas, who fed the hungry, brought hope to the imprisoned, gave comfort to the lost, and taught the truth to all.

May all who work here in the people's House strive to imitate him by putting You first in all we do.

Give us the courage, love, and strength of St. Nicholas so that, like him, we may serve You through our service to all our brothers and sisters.

May all that we do be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. O'HALLERAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

TAX REFORM

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, with the leadership of Ways and Means Committee Chairman KEVIN BRADY from Texas, the House has passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

The tax cuts bill that the House Republicans supported makes the Tax Code simpler and fairer, allows hardworking taxpayers to keep more of their own money they earn, and gives small businesses more room to grow and create jobs.

Our Senate colleagues deserve credit for listening to the people of the country and voting to pass tax cuts last week. Now we stand on the doorstep of history. As we move to conference committee, we have the chance to overhaul the antiquated and notoriously confusing Tax Code for the first time in a generation.

When the conference process is finished, the President will be able to sign a tax cut bill that serves the interests of American families and businesses rather than those of politicians and special interests.

As Speaker PAUL RYAN has said, these opportunities come around only once in a generation, and now is the time for us to seize the moment.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THE REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in continued opposition to the Republican tax plan.

Earlier this week, the House of Representatives agreed to go to conference with the Senate on H.R. 1, which gives breaks to the wealthy and corporations at the expense of the needs of the American family. This bill eliminates deductions used by those who need it most: students, teachers, veterans, the